

**Hamilton County General Health District
REGULAR MEETING – BOARD OF HEALTH
August 14, 2023 – 4 p.m.
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

At 4 p.m., Dan Meloy, Vice-President, called to order the regular session of the Board of Health of Hamilton County General Health District followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call of Members

Members Present: Dan Meloy, Vice President
James Brett
Mark A. Rippe

District Staff Present: Greg Kesterman, Health Commissioner
Jackie Lindner, Assistant Health Commissioner
Craig Davidson, Assistant Health Commissioner
Dr. Steve Feagins, Medical Director
Nee Fong Chin, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
Greg Varner, Finance Officer
Stephanie Taylor, Human Resources Officer

Guests: Chad Archdeacon, Ella Bal, Faith Parrilla, and Tanner Schmidt
(UC Medical Students; Service-Learning Project Presenters)

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Clean Kitchen Awards

Craig Davidson read the list of two Clean Kitchen Award recipients and congratulated them for their efforts to maintain a high level of sanitation and staff education.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Brett moved to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2023, Board of Health meeting.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Presentations

University of Cincinnati Student Service-Learning Project Presentation: Commissioner Kesterman introduced Chad Archdeacon, Ella Bal, Faith Parrilla, and Tanner Schmidt who were presenting.

Ella Bal described their student project as **assessing community mobility needs during emergency response sheltering situations** for Hamilton County. The project included conducting an inventory of Hamilton County medical shelter supply needs and identifying

the different gaps in the emergency responses during a disaster. The project included a survey that was sent to local emergency response coordinators and public health officials. The survey included questions regarding potential emergencies in which citizens need to go to an emergency shelter. The surveys were compiled, and the data was organized into graphs (included in the Board packet). One of the findings was accommodations for those with mobility disabilities was determined to be an area requiring additional work and consideration. After discovering this deficit, they decided that mobility inventory was going to be one of the primary focuses of the project.

The emergency supply list for those with disabilities included things like crutches, wheelchairs, Hoyer lifts, etc. (supply list included in the Board packet). A QR code was supplied in the packet for potential shopping for these supplies. In this project, the UC students described that it was critical that a disaster shelter had to maintain guidelines for accommodating different disabilities. Students also described the different best practice guidelines should an emergency scenario come up. Other areas that were not rated highly in their research were having adequate and knowledgeable staff to support individuals with certain mental health conditions or disorders. The students concluded that one other concern included the shortage of volunteers and a shortage of funding for disaster preparedness.

Mr. Meloy asked what surprised the students about the project. Mr. Archdeacon talked about the different potential disasters by geographical areas. Chemical spills and train derailments were statistically more likely in this area compared to other disasters such as hurricanes or tornadoes. Another student mentioned that most shelters adhere to the Red Cross guidelines for disaster response, and it does not have accommodating considerations for specific people. Mr. Meloy asked what can be done with this information and one student's perspective was an increase in public funding can help better prepare for potential emergencies. Commissioner Kesterman thanked the students that presented before the Board and complimented them for their hard work. The presentation shall count as 25 minutes of Board of Health Education.

8. Health Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Kesterman showed photos of construction progress at the 5050 Section Avenue location. The project budget and timeline are currently proceeding as anticipated. In his report, he talked about the Quarterly Performance Reporting as well as the Strategic Plan Reporting updates.

Commissioner Kesterman described that the Quarterly Performance Reporting can be enabled to give more information. Mr. Rippe asked to have further clarity regarding the report options. Commissioner Kesterman agreed to come back with more information for the Board next quarter.

Staff Reports

(a) Medical Director's Report

Dr. Steve Feagins Medical Director began by applauding the new interns and medical students that presented at the meeting. He informed the Board about the Epic electronic medical records that will go live on Monday, August 28. Dr. Feagins talked about the different medical teams that are implementing this system, which needs to be customized for

different facilities. He mentioned that Northern Kentucky Health Department went live with Epic July 31 after a six month lead up.

Dr. Feagins outlined the process of implementing the Epic EMR system. It will be used for organizing and collecting medical records that will collaborate over different health systems with vital communication. Dr. Feagins talked about the processes of how electronic records with the Epic system will also help get to the correct answer regarding uncovering identities in a mass trauma situation.

Dr. Feagins described the COVID Omicron variants and the new booster vaccine that is expected by early September.

Dr. Feagins reviewed recent mosquito surveillance reporting pools positive for West Nile Virus. There are no human cases at this time. Infectious Disease Group is still working to clarify testing for West Nile. They are likely underdiagnosed due to minimal symptoms that were presented.

Dr. Feagins shared an update on Ohio tick surveillance and Lyme Disease. So far in 2023, there have been 297 Lyme Disease cases from 45 counties in Ohio, including nine cases in Hamilton County.

Dr. Feagins described the different stimulants that contribute to overdose fatalities. Stimulants such as methamphetamine, amphetamine, or cocaine. Last year, stimulants were found in 48% of cases and 68% of reviewed cases have been positive for one stimulant. And he CDC reports that suicide rates in 2022 are the highest in U.S. history.

Dr. Feagins said that death certificates are being implemented through an electronic system, but it is antiquated. Dr. Feagins described the different struggles with coroners and funeral home directors regarding these documents. Dr. Feagins talked about how the Department of Health will partner with them to greatly improve the system.

The monthly Communicable Diseases Epi report was provided in the Board packet.

(b) Department of Community Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Ms. Lindner acknowledged the hard work of the team in preparing to implement the Epic system. Many people have helped in preparing to bring EPIC online on schedule. The effort has been immense.

Ms. Lindner also highlighted Darci Smith as the new Director of Harm Reduction. She also mentioned the work of a TB nurse who helped and coordinated assistance to a patient who needed immediate care. Details were highlighted in Ms. Lindner's report.

(c) Department of Environmental Health Services

Assistant Health Commissioner Mr. Davidson explained the annual, comprehensive cost methodology for license fees completed for environmental health programs. Mr. Davidson described the different licenses that are issued; over 3,000 annually. He talked about the balance of different fee adjustments for food facilities, (risk levels, mobile, vending, and temporary). The state provides a memo each year citing the Consumer Price Index percentage that is the maximum allowable increase for vending licenses. Mr. Davidson

talked about the methodology as specified by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and the newly provided files from Ohio Department of Health (ODH) that meet the standards for each program. The estimated revenue increase for these fee adjustments is around \$125,000.

Mr. Davidson showed the table of current and proposed fee adjustments and reviewed the fees for other public health departments locally, and across Ohio. He noted that some facilities will see a higher cost and some a lower cost for license fee renewals based on the new spreadsheet provided by ODH, since fees are now allocated into different categories.

If the Board approves, Mr. Davidson would like to issue a public hearing notice for food service operations, retail food establishments, public swimming pools, and campgrounds license fee increases as required by ORC. Commissioner Kesterman proposed holding the public hearing before the September 11 Board meeting at 3:45 p.m. to allow for anticipated public comments.

Mr. Rippe moved to have a public hearing for the proposed fee increases at 3:45 p.m. on September 11, 2023.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call – All Aye

Mr. Davidson reviewed the West Nile surveillance process. Nearly 1,000 mosquitos have been trapped and tested to date. A press release was recently issued for a positive sample collected in late July. Per protocol, staff conducted surveillance and provided education for residents within a half mile radius of the trap location.

Mr. Davidson noted that emails from Greater Cincinnati Water Works will now provide notice to Environmental Health staff if there is an area that has a boil advisory or water main shutdown.

Mr. Davidson reported that there were four housing condemnations and one restaurant required to attend a status meeting detailed in his report.

9. Finances

The July 2023 Disbursement Reports are included in the Board packet. Mr. Rippe inquired on the nature of the expense on several payments to peer recovery consultants. Mr. Varner clarified payments made.

Mr. Brett moved to approve the monthly disbursements.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Brett abstained on White Water expenditures.

10. New Business:

Personnel Policy: Section 5: Vacation Policy. Commissioner Kesterman invited the Human Resource Officer, Stephanie Taylor, to speak on the proposed leave policy resolution for Hamilton County employees. This new policy, which includes one week of vacation leave at hire, will give a better recruitment pitch for prospective employees. Ms. Taylor provided a comparison of the new policy and the current policy. After significant Board discussion, Ms. Taylor reiterated Commissioner Kesterman's comments that this new policy will be advantageous in recruiting new employees by offering vacation time up front.

Commissioner Kesterman recommended giving all employees a one-time 40-hour vacation credit to help make the transition equitable for all employees. Mr. Varner noted that it would be cost-neutral to implement the new leave policy, particularly because employees who leave during their first year of employment would not be eligible to receive a payout for the balance of vacation leave under the proposed policy. Commissioner Kesterman also noted that he reached out to Ms. Puthoff prior to the meeting. She offered a minor correction to the policy which is reflected in what was presented to the Board.

Mr. Meloy moved to approve the proposed Personnel Policy Section 5 Vacation changes and to grant a one-time 40-hour credit to all employees.

Mr. Rippe seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Resolution D: Certification of Delinquent Sewage Fees

Mr. Rippe moved to approve Resolution D: Certification of Delinquent Sewage Fees.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye; - Mr. Brett abstained on Jerin Dunham Delinquent Sewage Fee.

Fall Employee Appreciation Day September 27

Mr. Meloy made a motion to close the offices of Hamilton County Public Health on September 27 at noon to allow for employees to participate in a planned Fall Employee Appreciation event.

Mr. Brett seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

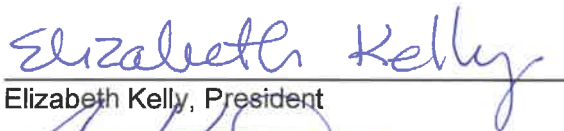
11. Adjournment

Mr. Rippe moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

Mr. Meloy seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote – All Aye

Next Board of Health meeting: September 11, 2023


Elizabeth Kelly, President


Greg Kesterman, Secretary
Health Commissioner

